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EDITORIALS

A PEOPLE WITHOUT A PRESS

THE SYNAGOGUE, THE CENTER, AND THE COMMUNITY

NO PEACE WITHOUT JUSTICE

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RELIGIOUS SANCTIONS FOR THE SEX-GUIDANCE OF MODERN JEWISH YOUTH

by Eugene Kohn

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RECREATING JEWISH PERSONALITIES

by Ira Eisenstein

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EDITORIALS

A People Without a Press

THE transformation of the Jewish Daily Bulletin from a daily to a weekly was scarcely noticed by the masses of American Jews. Caught up in their individual affairs or dazzled by more dramatic and significant events they gave to this journalistic defeat no attention whatsoever. Yet, the failure of the Jewish Daily Bulletin to maintain itself as a daily is both a significant symptom of the weakness of American Jewry and a challenge for its future. The sad fact is that in all America not enough Jews were interested in current Jewish news to preserve this paper. All sorts of indices have been developed by Jewish educators and social workers to determine the intensity of Jewish loyalty in this country. No barometer could carry so ominous a message as this simple one. Four million American Jews are so indifferent to Jewish life that they cannot maintain a daily news organ in English.

To be sure, not all the responsibility for the collapse of the Jewish Daily Bulletin rests upon the shoulders of American Jewry. A large part of it must be placed on the managers and editors of that periodical. They were obviously guilty of a mistake in strategy when they attempted to turn the Bulletin from an organ devoted entirely to news into a daily newspaper. They were guilty of further errors in the fact that they chose their contributors with astonishing carelessness. Time and again the Bulletin in its heyday carried articles of comment on Jewish affairs by people who were manifestly incompetent. In addition to forgivable blunders, the management of the Bulletin deliberately involved the magazine in Jewish politics. For example, it engaged itself in a feud with the World Zionist Organization, and sympathized with the Revisionists. Quite naturally, a large part of the readers resented these tactics and lost confidence in the paper. But with all these extenuating circumstances enumerated, the fact remains that even before the Bulletin entered upon those policies which were to prove so disastrous, the measure of support which came to it was hopelessly inadequate. It is that latter fact which is so painful and distressing, so ominous in its implications.

The challenge for the future is clear-cut and decisive. In the first place, those Jews who are actively interested in Jewish affairs cannot possibly allow themselves to be without an adequate source of news information. The effort must be begun all over again, this time in full awareness of the mistakes which must be avoided.

But there is another and larger challenge. The attempts to win the interest and loyalty of American Jewry to Jewish

causes must be carried forward persistently. It is a mistake to believe that spectacular and tragic incidents are sufficient to make Jews intelligently Jewish. The general effect on Jewish life of movements like Nazi persecutions has been revealed as being largely negative. The Jew, following these events, feels himself insecure, realizes that he cannot escape from his Jewish identity, resolves to remain Jewish, and there lets the matter rest. As a result Hitlerite Germany has served not to make Jews into Jews, but to make them merely non-Gentiles. The task which confronts Jewish leadership is then to turn this negative Jewish attitude into something positive, meaningful and constructive. That this may be done, a Jewish daily paper is indispensable as an educating force in Jewish citizenship. Moreover, a criterion of judgment is now put before us. We shall know that we have won the Jewish masses from negativism to positive affirmation when we discover that they are sufficiently interested in Jewish matters to read the current news concerning them.

The Synagogue, The Center and The Community

THERE is sad irony in the fact that, while the great mass of American Jewry remains as yet coldly indifferent to Jewish educational needs, the two institutions which are attempting to meet these needs, the synagogue and the community center, are in many instances wastefully competing with each other. The trend of the community center in recent years to become not only the focal point for recreational and cultural Jewish association, but also a vigorous integrating agency within the community which it serves, is a most hopeful step toward the ultimate realization of community organization. The recognition of the progressive synagogue, on the other hand, that Jewish religious life in addition to worship embraces all the variegated elements of vital Jewish living today is another step in the right direction. But what is disheartening is the increasing appearance in our various communities of an acrimonious competitive spirit in the efforts of each institution to attract larger numbers to its activities, or to attempt to frustrate the projects of the other institutions.

Adult study courses have been duplicated in neighboring institutions, often adjacent to one another. There have been cases brought to our attention where a synagogue was forced to give up its project of public lectures by a community center board of directors who claimed the prerogative in establishing such lecture courses. Rabbis on boards of Centers have been known to lay down the rule as to how far the Center may go without interfering with the projects of their own synagogues. At times these acts of interference were accompanied by implied threats of withdrawal of financial support. This jockeying for dominant position, for moral and financial support, coupled with the least effective approach to what should be a common objective, must ultimately do grave injury to the cause of Jewish unity and cooperation .

The time has come when the leadership of the Center movement in America and the leadership of American synagogues must sit down together and work out a practical *modus vivendi.* The reading of papers on the question at conventions will not accomplish much. We are past the stage of these preliminary overtures. A commission representing the interested organizations, the Jewish Welfare Board, the United Synagogue, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the Association of Center Executives and others should be formed to study the problem and to devise the specific program for healthy and constructive cooperation in their respective activities.

Such a program would start with the premise that the goal to be attained is a central communal Jewish authority, representative of all interests and sensitive to the needs, cultural and spiritual, no less

than philanthropic, within the community. A practical approach to the matter of adult Jewish educational projects might be the setting up of a Communal Board of Jewish Adult Education. This Board might well serve as the coordinating agency through which the synagogues and centers in a given community can plan their programs and activities together. It could prevent conflicts of projects, eliminating unnecessary duplication, indicate needed activities. The combined efforts of the constituent institutions would challenge more universal interest and a broader effectiveness.

We must not fail to recognize the power of the Center to attract a great mass of Jews who remain aloof from the synagogue; but the Center is not yet the community organization although an important agency toward its realization. Nor must we fail to realize the dynamic religious influence which the synagogue can exercise; but as Jews are constituted today, the synagogue is not able to include the whole of Jewry which must comprise a true community. Above all we cannot afford to permit a competitive methodology borrowed from the market-place to disintegrate further our Jewish communal life, which is in such imperative need today of reflecting greater unity of action and of purpose.

No Peace Without Justice

ON November 7th last, Secretary of State Hull issued a statement on the position of the United States in the current conflict between Italy and Ethiopia. In the course of this statement, he argued for broader neutrality legislation, to include raw materials, food and other vital necessities in the category of articles which may not be sold to either of the belligerent nations. The Neutrality Bill now in force establishes an embargo on the shipment of arms, ammunition, and implements of war from the United States to either belligerent, and declares that American citizens who travel on vessels of the belligerents do so at their own risk.

Inadequate as the present bill is, it represents a significant advance over the procedure of our government on previous occasions of the same nature. The significance lies in the candid realization that "transactions of any kind between American nationals and a belligerent may conceivably lead to difficulties of one kind or another between the nationals and that belligerent. Efforts of this government to extend protection to these nationals might lead to difficulties between the United States and the belligerent." These words, taken from Secretary Hull's address, have diplomatically hit the nail on the head. Wars are *not* undertaken to make the world safe for democracy, or civilization. Wars are *not* fought to preserve the honor of the nation. A member of the government has finally come out with the truth: wars are fought to protect the foreign interests of nationals; wars are caused by economic conflicts.

If that is the case, we are faced by two alternatives. The first alternative is preparation for war, militarism. Many elements of the United States have already chosen that alternative. The new budget increases appropriations for the navy; the CCC camps, under the jurisdiction of the War Department, are gradually becoming training grounds for soldiers; the President, in his Armistice Day address, stressed preparedness. On what basis is this alternative chosen? The answer obviously must be that, so long as industrialists, seeking either foreign markets or new sources of raw materials, penetrate into the economic life of a country, "transactions" will take place "which may conceivably lead to difficulties." In other words, under the present system of capitalism and imperialism, war is inevitable, sooner or later. Even if the League succeeded, in the Italo-Ethiopian case, to end the war and bring about a settlement, the basic proposition would still be valid. In this particular instance, the purposes of the League hap-

pen to coincide with the imperialist purposes of Great Britain, and if anything is accomplished, the accomplishment will have to be credited more to British imperialism than to League of Nations diplomacy or persuasion. The only thing to do then is to prepare for this inevitable conflict. If we prepare sufficiently, the war may be postponed for another few years, until the potential enemy feels strong enough to begin. But at least we will not be caught unawares.

The second alternative is to establish the kind of economic system in which war is *not* inevitable or even necessary. Such a system would replace capitalism and the profit system by a cooperative system based upon production for use. So long as production is based upon the possibilities of profit, that profit will be sought at the most advantageous source. If there are fifteen million people in the land who are unemployed and on relief, and who do not command purchasing power, surpluses must either be destroyed so that prices will rise and the profit can be squeezed out of those who can still afford to buy—or foreign markets must be procured. In an economy based upon production for use, what is produced will be used, and what cannot be used will not be produced.

Those who defend the present economic system, therefore, are naturally suspicious of ardent preachers of peace; they realize that peace involves a change in the system. Have you ever wondered why it is that socialists are never branded "militarists" and "war mongers"; and why capitalists are never called "pacifists" and "cowards"? Let us be perfectly clear, then, about the correlation of these two issues. It is ultimately futile to plead for peace without working at the same time for a new economic set-up. If you insist upon maintaining the status quo, the best you can hope for is a short respite before the inevitable holocaust.

Religious Sanctions for the Sex-Guidance of Modern Jewish Youth

By Eugene Kohn

"I do not pity the old men, fumbling after
The golden bird of love, the purple grapes
of laughter. . . .
Death can comfort the old; pain, age understands—
Not the tossed bright head of folly, the
soft impatient hands.
I do not pity the old men's forgetful tears
and mirth.
But the young must eat pomegranate seeds
in the darkness under the earth."

THESE lines by Babette Deutsch express an attitude toward youth seldom observed in those who train and guide the young. We are prone to forget the agonizing perplexities of youth when it is confronted with the management of its sex life. The "conspiracy of silence" which sought to withhold from the young all knowledge of the facts of sex has been foiled. Knowing these facts, however, has not brought with it a deeper appreciation of their meaning, of the relation of sex to the rest of life. Is sex something obscene, or is it holy? Is it a mere casual gratification of a physical appetite, or an expression of the most intimate aspect of human personality Is it a silly jest, or the most serious thing in life? Does it lead to romance and adventure, or to disillusionment and cynicism? Such are the questions that sex poses to our youth. Is there any way by which we can answer these questions, or must each of our young people taste for himself the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, though its principal effect be to make

him aware of his nakedness and shame? Is there no way by which the young may be inducted into sex life without having to spend half of their years in the Nether World because of having bitten into the fateful pomegranate?

In every age the young, as they approach maturity, are avid of sex experience, and in every age there are those whose experience brings with it pain and degradation. Obviously, in this strong life-current which pulses through the veins of youth there is something creative, and hence divine. But there are times when the very abundance of life militates to destroy life, like an unpruned and unweeded garden gone to seed. Every civilization has grappled with the problem of controlling sex behavior, which has been hedged about with all manner of restraints, from the most irrational taboos based on groundless fears to more reasonable efforts designed to secure to all people the benefits of a normal sex-experience. In those societies in which the prohibitions and licenses of sex were clearly defined in unchallenged codes, the problem of youth in controlling its sex life was much less acute than it is in our modern world. In such societies, youth had only the responsibility of choosing to obey the law or to disobey it, under whatever penalties the law prescribed. The law in such communities had, moreover, the sanction of religion, and obedience to it was felt to be the way of salvation.

So long as both Judaism and Christianity accepted implicitly the doctrine of a revealed code of conduct which was the key to the eternal salvation of the soul, the youth of both Jewry and Christendom knew, or at least thought they knew, how they should behave. They did not always conform in practice to what they believed was right; but at least those who were most anxious to do the right, were relieved of all doubt as to whether or not they *were* doing right.

But such is no longer the case in our day. A wide skepticism prevails as to the validity of traditional moral standards and of the religious concepts with which they are associated. Until recently the fears of venereal disease on the one hand, and of hell-fire on the other, were mainly depended upon as sanctions for the enforcement of the traditional codes. These sanctions are defunct and we do not lament their passing. Relieved of them, youth feels free, free to experience and experiment. But freedom involves responsibility and such responsibility is a heavy load for youth to carry. Experimentation is always interesting but it is often dangerous. One cannot experiment with one's own body and soul as one can with guinea pigs. In consequence, the sex behavior of young people today is not so much self-determined as chance-determined. The multiplicity of theories about sex affords an opportunity for the rationalization of any course of sex-conduct on which chance and impulse may have launched one. Nor has fear, as is sometimes claimed, been exorcised from sex life by the discrediting of the old religious sanctions and by the modern habit of frank and voluble discussion of sex matters. Only now, fear seems to operate in a reverse manner. In former days it was associated with the transgression of the conventions that inhibited the sex impulse; in modern times it is induced by the thought of the dangers resulting from inhibitions and restraints. Complexes, fixations, psychoses of all sorts are the bogies, the fear of which often drives young people today into immature and disillusioning sex-relations or keeps them worried and agitated when they submit to reasonable and harmless self-restraint.

Modern social conditions also render the choices of youth more difficult than in the days of our fathers. Economic considerations compel late marriages and are thus conducive to premarital sex relations. This is true even in prosperous times and to an even greater extent in times of economic depression. The dissociation of sex from procreation which is involved in promiscuous sex intercourse before marriage, is likely to lead to extra-marital sex

adventures after marriage. The use of contraceptives has made illicit sex relations "safe" and has further tended to make sex experience appear irrevelant to the needs and loyalties of family life. Commercialized amusement on stage and screen, in cabarets, road-houses and dance-halls, exploits sex interest for profit. Everywhere sex situations are flaunted in the faces of the young and render more taut the tension that is involved in all sex restraint.

II.

The revolt against traditional standards of sex behavior on the part of modern youth is of a piece with the general revolt of the modern world against asceticism and otherworldliness. The chaos that prevails in regard to the ethics of sex is, accordingly, to be ascribed to the transition from otherworldly religion to a religion that seeks the salvation of man in his earthly life. The religious ideology on which the old standards were based has been discredited and no new ideology has been substituted for it. Before we can make such a substitution, we must understand what was wrong with the traditional attitude to sex that has made it so ineffective in our day.

Until recent times, the motive for the control of sex life was not primarily the regulation of sex in the interest of social or personal welfare, but the discipline of the individual designed to secure the dominance of his spiritual over his physical nature. According to the physiological notions of the Middle Ages in which the traditional standards were formulated, the human being was composite of body and soul, dust of the earth and the spirit that God had breathed into men's nostrils. Man's soul, in this sense, was not identified with his entire psyche, for that included passions and sensations that functioned through specific physical organs and ministered to bodily needs. The appetitive side of human nature thus tended to keep man tied to earth and constituted his Evil Inclination. Only his Good Inclination, those spiritual aspirations that had no apparent attachment to any bodily mechanism, could achieve immortality. To restrict the operation of the physical appetites was regarded as meritorious, and if limited indulgence was permitted in order to maintain the life of the individual or of the race, it was a concession to man's inherent weakness. Though indulgence of the appetities to the extent permitted by the law of God was no bar to salvation, any indulgence beyond these permitted limits was sin and jeopardized one's share in the world to come.

The temptation of the Evil Inclination of sex was so generally feared that to deny oneself all forms of its gratification not absolutely required for procreation was regarded as meritorious, even where such gratification did not expressly conflict with the supposedly revealed text. The Catholic Church went even further and regarded continence as meritorious even where it interfered with procreation. The myth of the virgin birth of Jesus is clear evidence of the apotheosis of virginity and of the notion that all human beings are "conceived in sin," a thought which, though much further developed in Christianity than in Judaism, had roots in Jewish scripture. (Cf. Psalms 51:7). Accordingly, Catholicism insists on the celibacy of the clergy and of the monastic orders, and forbids any form of birth-control except by continence, since it regards all sex-indulgence as evil except as necessary for the continuance of the race and expressly sanctioned by scripture and tradition. The attitude of the Church to divorce was similarly dissociated from any question of social welfare but was related to the problem of personal salvation. Marriage was a sacrament and "Whomsoever God united let no man put asunder." The marriage might be an unhappy one, but let those who had contracted it bear their lot with resignation and they would be compensated by bliss in the world to come. These conceptions of the Church have, to a great extent, come to inform the legal institutions of the state.

Note, for example, the legal obstacles to divorce by mutual consent, or to the dissemination of information on birth control. Through these state institutions, such ideas affect the attitude of Jews who must abide by the law as well as of Christians. Their effect is mainly to make the legal and customary restraints on sex indulgence appear to the young as irrational taboos and vestiges of ancient superstition.

Otherworldly motivation, although it dominated every aspect of Jewish life, did not as completely obscure consideration of personal and social welfare on this earth as it did in orthodox Christianity. Judaism had had many centuries of development before the notion of a world to come became prevalent. During all those formative years, the motive for the control of sex life was adherence to a law that God had revealed to His people for their benefit on this earth. Though bringing children into the world was considered not only a privilege but also a *mitzvah* or religious obligation, the Talmud definitely commends the use of contraceptives where considerations of health make the birth of more children undesirable and it does not advocate continence in such cases. In the traditional marriage rite, gratitude is expressed not only for the continuation of the race through marriage, but also for what marriage enables us to experience of "gladness and joy, delight and exultation, love and fraternity, peace and comradeship." In contrast to the attitude of the Church, Judaism discountenances celibacy. Moreover, although Jewish tradition accepted the idea of the dualism of human nature as divided between the Evil Inclination and the Good, and identified sex with the Evil Inclination, it frequently showed an appreciation of the functional value of the so-called Evil Inclination and the possibility of its employment to good purpose. Thus the commandment to serve God "with *all* thy heart" is construed to mean, "with thy Evil Inclination as well as with thy Good." The thought is moreover expressed that the soul as it comes from God is pure, and that man himself is responsible for giving to the Evil Yezer its bad character by abusing the appetites that constitute this aspect of his nature. Likewise the Jewish attitude toward divorce is one which is distinctly at variance with that of the Roman Church in that it takes cognizance of the social values of family life on this earth, and does not insist on submission to an intolerable yoke here for the sake of a heavenly reward hereafter.

Notwithstanding the differences between the Jewish and the Christian orthodox traditions in their evaluation of sex, there is clearly discernible in Judaism, after the destruction of the Judaean state, a growing emphasis on otherworldliness and, with it, a growing asceticism expressing itself in the tendency to hedge sex about with unnecessary taboos. Already in Tannaitic times, Rabbi Jose ben Johannan advises, "Talk not much with woman"; and this was said as applying even to one's own wife, not to mention other women (Abot 1:5). As woman's hair was thought to contribute to her sex appeal, custom came to demand that her head be covered or shorn after her marriage, for it was more important that a woman be unattractive to other men than that she be attractive to her husband. Similarly it was considered immodest for a woman to let her voice be heard in song by men and this is still the basis of Orthodox Judaism's objection to female voices in a religious choir. Until modern times Jewish marriages were arranged by the parents, frequently without even the knowledge of the children. Social intercourse between boys and girls was practically nonexistent and such liberties, as their dancing together, were viewed with abhorrence. Moreover, the Talmudic sanction notwithstanding, Orthodox Jewry on the whole has taken the same adverse attitude toward birth control as has the Catholic Church and for the same reason, that it discountenances sex indulgence for other purposes than that of procreation.

The evil inherent in the ascetic attitude to sex is its disturbance of the harmony and integrity of human character by the creation of an artificial dualism. Medieval asceticism dramatized the opposition which frequently exists between man's appetities and his social impulses as a conflict between flesh and spirit, the Evil Inclination and the Good Inclination, Satan and God. In this conflict, the sex interest was torn apart; its obvious physical expression was ascribed to the flesh, the Evil Inclination, Satan, while its more sublimated social and personal expression was attributed to the spirit, the Good Inclination, God. Instead of looking upon lust and love as representing the unethical and the ethical use respectively of the same psycho-physical mechanism, the medieval mind looked upon them as two opposing forces contending for the mastery. To insure the dominance of the soul over the body, of love over lust, one had to have recourse to prayer, abstinence and the mortification of the flesh. Modern psychology has shown the danger to mental health of such an attempt to suppress even the normal and innocent manifestations of sex. The attitude of our day conforms to the thought expressed by Robert Browning and significantly attributed by him to a Jewish sage, Rabbi ben Ezra:

"Let us not not always say
'Spite of this flesh to-day
I strove, made head, gained ground
upon the whole!'
As the bird wings and sings,
Let us cry 'All good things
Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more
now than flesh helps soul.' "

III.

In view of the foregoing, it is apparent that we cannot expect modern youth to be guided by tradition in the management of its sex life. A code of sex ethics in order to gain acceptance in modern times must commend itself by its contribution to personal and social welfare. The right and wrong of sex behavior must be defined with reference to the physiological and sociological facts with which we must reckon if our sex conduct is to contribute to our personal happiness and social worth. And youth must be influenced to accept such a code not by the ineffectual traditional sanctions of posthumous reward and punishment., but by other religious sanctions in keeping with the this-worldly outlook of modern times. The drafting of such a code in all its details calls for more positive knowledge of the psychology and sociology of sex than we at present possess. But consideration for the pitiful dilemma of modern youth does not permit us to shirk the task altogether. We must give our young people such guidance as we are in a position to give them by at least laying down those principles that we can infer from our present state of knowledge, even though there may be sex situations, other than those here discussed, for which these principles may not offer adequate guidance.

Before we attempt, however, to formulate any rules, we must insist on a fundamental assumption that runs counter to a deep-seated traditional prejudice. We must recognize that *the ethics of sex have no special kind of laws different from those that apply to other human relations.* We must rid our minds of the disposition to look upon sex transgressions as inherently more corrupting or contaminating than the transgression of other moral laws that make for decent human associatio.n There are circles in which the statement that a man is "immoral" immediately connotes that he is a sexual libertine. There is no more reason why it should have this connotation than that it should suggest that the man cheats at cards or in business, beats his wife, or tyrannizes over his children. The tendency to look upon immorality in sex relations as the symbol of all immorality is doubtless a hangover from the medieval psychology according to which sexuality was identified with the Evil Inclination. This tendency, therefore, militates against the adoption of an ethical code of sex con-

duct because it seems to make irrelevant the application to sex behavior of common rules of human intercourse in which the conscience of most people, young as well as old, generally acquiesce.

Most people regardless of age would admit, for example, that an infant, born into the world the most helpless of all living creatures, is entitled to such nurture, care and education as will enable him to grow up in health and to learn to understand the complex civilization in which he lives so that he will eventually be able to maintain his own life without injury to others and contribute his share to the common welfare. Who is responsible for insuring these opportunities to the child? There are a few radical theorists who advocate the placing of complete responsibility in the hands of the state. But most parents would never consent to such a course and most educators are agreed that it would not be to the advantage of the child. At any rate modern society has not entrusted the state with full responsibility for the care of the child. It has delegated a limited measure of responsibility for the education of the child to the state through the public school system, but the school is not prepared to take over the complete care of the child from birth to maturity. It is not even ready to assume responsibility for the nurture of its pupils during the years that they attend school. Moreover, its educational program recognizes the need for supplementary educational efforts by the home and by the religious organizations with which the home is affiliated. Since the school and all other public institutions assume only limited responsibility for the care of the maturing individual, the home must discharge not only all the residual functions but must also undertake to integrate the educational influences of all the institutions interested in the welfare of the growing child into a single harmonious personal ideal. To admit this is to recognize the duty of so regulating sex behavior as to make it consistent with the ideal of a socially efficient home life.

This involves as a minimum that the parents cooperate with one another in a harmonious spirit and with passionate devotion to the interests of their children at least to the time that the youngest child of the family reaches maturity. Maturity, moreover, must, for our purposes, be conceived not in a physiological but in a sociological sense. No human individual can be considered as mature until he has acquired not merely the necessary physical and mental powers but the necessary knowledge of the world and the economic capacity to assume the responsibility of parenthood in modern society. This would demand that even parents who have only one child must live together in close fellowship for over twenty years. But, by the time a couple has reached the end of this period, they have attained an age when remating would, in most cases be exceedingly difficult, particularly for the woman, and when, if a divorce takes place and either party reweds, there is little likelihood of his or her being able to raise other children to maturity before the decrepitude of old age makes itself felt. Obviously, then, *people intending to wed and establish a home must be prepared to remain united for the rest of their lives.* Divorce, though it is justified where the cooperation necessary for parenthood has irreparably broken down, always implies failure. The insistence of most religions on the permanence of the marital tie as the normal and ideal relationship to which the young should look forward, and for which they must be prepared to sacrifice lesser interests, is therefore no arbitrary rule based on superstitious dogma or ascetic practice but has its justification in a real human need.

How is it with regard to the insistence of most religions, at least of the western world, on monogamy and their condemnation of extra-marital sex relations? Is this a mere taboo, or is it, too, a necessary restriction in the interest of a better social life? Many advocates of greater sex freedom, even when they concede the desirability of the permanence of the

marital relation, are disposed to condone extra-marital adventures. Indeed they condemn the jealousy which resents such relations, regarding it as the resurgence of atavistic impulse unworthy of civilized human beings, or as a perversion of human nature induced by the irrational and fanatical codes that are a relic of a more ignorant, superstitious and bigoted era. They base their argument on the claim that sex gratification does not necessarily result in, and need not be motivated by, the desire for procreation; that the pleasure it affords is its own justification and that the cooperation of a couple in the bringing up of their children need, therefore, not be disturbed by the extra-marital sex adventures of either of the parties to the marriage.

These opinions are expressive of a natural reaction against the medieval attitude toward sex. There is justification for a revolt against the notion that all sex intercourse except for purposes of procreation is sin. But this admission does not justify the inference that extra-marital adventures are to be condoned. Such a view overlooks the fact that, though sex intercourse does not necessarily involve procreation, procreation does necessarily involve sex intercourse, and that the emotionally charged memories and anticipations of sex experience are among the strongest ties to keep husband and wife together. We may even grant that there is something base in the rage which so often makes a jealous husband seek to avenge himself upon his wife or her paramour, but this does not mean that his sense of outrage and bitter disappointment is of itself unjustified or uncivilized. For, when a man enters marriage in the expectation of sharing with his mate the responsibility of bringing children into the world and providing for them; when, as is but natural, he looks upon these children as the living embodiment of their love and they are the dearer to him on that account, he cannot acquiesce without inner protests, however restrained and gentle his conduct may be, at the intrusion of a third party into a relationship in which his deepest interests in life have become involved. The same is true, of course, if the man is the offender.

In view of the emotional involvements of sex, there is every reason to look upon a sex adventure outside of marriage as a potential menace to the permanence of the marital tie. Common sense regards such behavior as infidelity and that is exactly what it is. The essence of faithfulness is that, when people enter into any human relationship whatsoever, they act in a way that will not disappoint the legitimate expectations of the other party or parties to the relationship. To regard as uncivilized the indignation experienced by the husband or wife when disappointed in expectations, based not merely on a marriage vow, but on an intimate experience of personal communion shared by the couple and by them alone, seems an ironic jest. If it were a mark of civilization to treat sexual unions as casual episodes without any deep personal significance, then the lower animals would have to be considered more highly civilized than man. The truth is, however, that the humanizing and civilizing of sex consists in precisely the opposite tendency, in making sex relations enhance human personality and become more and more involved with ethical and spiritual import.

It is to be noted that the mutual passion which binds a married pair to one another is not a mere convention but is nature's method of insuring their cooperation in the care of the young. This is observable among many species as well as among men. What is distinctive of man is merely the extention of the period of infancy which calls for life-long cooperation. Now, since this mutual passion is natural and rooted in instinct, not a mere by-product of a conventional code, it normally operates even where marriage is childless. Consequently, the disappointment resulting from infidelity is as real in the case of a childless marriage as in one in which there are children. Though the social effects of the break up of such a

marriage are not as grave as where the welfare of children is at stake, thus suggesting the desirability of fewer legal obstacles to divorce in such cases, the norm in the case of childless marriage as in that in which children are born must be permanence.

IV.

In the principles that we have so far examined, emphasis has been placed on the negative aspect of our problem, on the suffering of the individual and the deterioration of the race that may flow from a lack of restraint in certain expressions of our sex impulses. There are happily more affirmative considerations that make self-control in sex behavior not merely socially expedient but personally life-enhancing. It is these considerations, perhaps even more than the others, that must determine the behavior of youth in respect to many practices that our traditional codes of sex conduct regard as immoral. The problem of moral living has two aspects. On the one hand, it represents the effort to bring the aims of the individual into accord with those of his fellowmen and the social community in which he lives; on the other, it represents the endeavor to harmonize the aims of the individual with one another in a single, well-integrated personality. It is in connection with the latter aspect of the problem that sex becomes such a disturbing factor in youth, leading young people to commit acts of which they later feel ashamed and to oscillate in their general attitude to sex between regarding it as supremely desirable and superlatively disgusting. The final result is too frequently that blasé and cynical sophistication which accepts a certain pride in the deflation of the hopes and yearnings associated with sex desire as a cheap substitute for the joy of realization and attainment. It is pitiful to see youth pronounce the grapes of life that it finds out of reach to be sour when a better planned scheme of life might have brought them within reach.

Ethics has common ground with esthetics. Behavior may be viewed as the art of living, an art to which Goethe's words apply as to all other arts: "*In der Beschraenkung zeigt sich erst der Meister.*" Unity of design in art demands the elimination of all that is irrelevant and the careful selection and arrangement of all details to accord with the design as a whole. Such limitation is not felt by the artist as a handicap to self-expression but as an indispensable condition for it. Similarly, in the management of our personal behavior, the details of our life must be planned in relation to the whole and, instead of seeking to explore every possibility of experience into which external stimuli may lure us, we should be selective in our responses and inhibit those that give us the lesser and less permanent satisfactions in the interest of the greater and more permanent.

Since, as we have seen, the normal cycle of life calls for the rearing of children in a home the basis of which is the permanent and exclusive union of man and wife, it is clearly the course of wisdom so to guide our behavior that this union will not only be firm and stable but will give us the maximum satisfaction which it can yield. In view of the fact that man is possessed of memory and imagination, it is unreasonable to expect that one's sex behavior before marriage can be wholly irrelevant to one's sex behavior after marriage. Many a man who sowed his wild oats in youth may have later settled down to a respectable married life, but was this life, as subjectively experienced, the same as if he had not sowed his wild oats? To answer affirmatively is to belie all that psychology teaches of how our past experiences, particularly those associated with intense emotion, condition our subsequent behavior. The romanticists have always realized this truth. There is no way we can "recapture the first fine careless rapture" of any great experience. The first experience of the connubial relationship is of this order. The intensity of that experience must be immeasurably increased, when it is one that has long been

looked forward to and when it is regarded as the beginning of a new life of intimate communion with the object of one's love. Such a moment lives for ever in the memory and, being shared by one's mate strengthens the sympathetic bond between them which renews itself with every subsequent experience that proceeds from it. Sex ceases to be an isolated phenomenon, a recourse for the relief of nervous tension, a form of momentary intoxication, but is woven into the pattern of daily life, bringing even routine tasks into the service of a great passion. Marriage, when it proceeds from love, is adventure. Those who enter it, set out on a path that they will never be able to retrace and find themselves compelled to give more and more "hostages to fortune." The adventure may miscarry, if the adventurers have not the stamina to face bravely its exacting demands. But it is only when people enter marriage with jaded appetite and spent passion that marriage is a settling down. In all other cases, marriage is an unsettling, a break up of the ego-centricity of one's life and the mobilizing of one's powers for more meaningful, purposeful and creative living.

(*To be concluded in the next issue*)

Recreating Jewish Personalities

By Ira Eisenstein

THERE is a notion abroad, common among Jews as well as non-Jews, that with the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in the year 70 C. E. by the Roman legions Jewish life in Palestine ceased altogether. It is generally believed that the "dispersion" of the Jewish people dates from that tragic series of events which culminated in the defeat of the Jews in the war against the Romans. History books, too, contribute to the persistence of that notion, especially when they treat of the history of the Second Commonwealth. The impression is given that the *galut* began when the Temple went up in flames. The fact is that Jewish life continued in Palestine for almost four centuries after the destruction. While it is true that during the third century the center of Jewish life definitely shifted to Babylonia, for at least one hundred fifty years after the year 70 Palestine remained the spiritual center of the Jewish people.

Although almost every trace of sovereignty was gone, the Jewish community still enjoyed spiritual and social autonomy; and the intellectual and religious life carried on in Palestine, marked by the leadership of outstanding personalities and the reformulation of the way of Jewish life, influenced Judaism vitally for centuries after. Indeed, the "normative" Judaism of tradition took on the form in which we know it during the first two centuries of the common era. Such personalities as Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai, Rabban Gamliel, Rabbi Akiba, Bar Kokba, Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai, Rabbi Meir, and others lived and had their being in Palestine; and that momentous work, the Mishnah, was compiled there at the end of the second century, under the leadership of Rabbi Judah the Prince.

Why are these facts not generally known? Of course, the first and most obvious answer is that Jews suffer from an appalling ignorance of Jewish history altogether. But even those who have evinced an interest in the Jewish past have found it difficult to orient themselves to the period from the year 70 to 200 because the material concerning that period has not been available in the form best calculated to hold the interest of the modern reader. Until our own day, Jewish history has been almost exclusively *literary* history. The career of the People of the Book has been treated as the history of those writings

which have moulded the Jewish mind. Personalities have been neglected. To such an extent have personalities been ignored that, in many instances, those whose teachings are embodied in those writings have received little if any recognition. As a result, we know very little about the individuals who played major roles in Jewish history. Jewish literature offers scant evidence of the lives of those who people it. Therefore, we have not a very vivid idea of what sort of persons they were. How did they look? What sort of home life did they lead? What kind of temperament did they have? How did they spend their youth? What were their relations with their friends? Were they good specimens, physically? Jewish literature never troubled to transmit such details to posterity. We do know a great deal about Josephus, but that is because he himself recorded his autobiography. He bequeathed a full length portrait of himself to the world. Characteristically enough, he did not write in Hebrew, and if it had not been for the Church, his writings would have been lost to us altogether.

That personality played a secondary role in the Jewish consciousness was no accident. That fact derived naturally from the Jewish God idea, and from the consequent reaction of Jews to the non-Jewish world. In pagan Rome the Emperor was deified. In Christian Europe another man was identified with God. The Jewish people had always been wary of ascribing too much glory to mortal beings, and their fears were mightily confirmed by the idolatry to which such action led. With their conception of God, history itself became the instrument of a plan, and what individuals seemed to accomplish was for Jews merely the reflection in human affairs of God's directive power. And if it was necessary to attribute to Moses, for example, the power of addressing God directly, in order to account for the direct revelation of the Torah, our ancestors provided the necessary antidote to their own temptation to worship him by pointing up his frailties, recording his disobediences and even concealing the location of his burial place.

As long as Torah was regarded as the directly revealed will of God, personalities did not matter much; the content of the Torah and its proper interpretation were the main concern of the Jew. Today we must revise our values. For us, the Torah is the fragmentary anthology of a vast literature which reflects the evolution of the civilization of the Jews. It is for us the bridge that links us to the past, and establishes our continuity with the past. It is the source of our knowledge of their life, our understanding of their ideas, our insight into their values. Our desire to know what they believed and practiced is no longer based upon our determination to believe and practice as they did; we are eager to discover what kind of people those beliefs and practices made of them, what kind of society those beliefs and practices established. We are beginning to develop an interest in the personalities of Jewish history.

But the historian or biographer who sets out to portray them finds that there is little material available as a result of that very disposition to minimize the importance of personality. In the Rabbinic period, it is true, there are many *haggadic* stories and legends touching upon the lives of important Jewish leaders, but these stories and legends reveal less about the persons concerned than they do about the people who created and disseminated the legends. In order to paint a complete picture of one of our Sages, it is necessary to gather and organize all his known statements and opinions, set them against the background of the period in which he lived, and attempt to reconstruct his character from the stray information about him. The material for the portrait of any one of the Rabbis is scattered over the whole "sea of the Talmud," and flung far among the Midrashic collections. The task

of the Jewish biographer is indeed a prodigious one. But if as a result of his difficult work he succeeds in bringing to life a Jewish personality, he has added to the knowledge of our past and has created, in addition,an incentive to the modern reader to learn more about the past of his people.

Such an arduous task has been undertaken and successfully carried through by Dr. Ben Zion Bokser in his book, "Pharisaic Judaism in Transition."*

Dr. Bokser's work is not as much a comprehensive study of Pharisaic Judaism as it is a portrait of Rabbi Eliezer the Great, who flourished during those crucial years following the destruction of the Temple in 70 C. E. As a character study it is vivid. The reader of Dr. Bokser's book comes to know Rabbi Eliezer's personality, his attitudes, his values, his preferences, his prejudices. What is particularly gratifying about this study is the author's method. Unlike so many patriotic Jewish writers, he does not attempt to convince the reader that the Rabbis were uniformly noble, high minded and idealistic. On the contrary, the impression left with the reader is that Rabbi Eliezer was far from being the high-minded idealist that we would naturally expect of one whose teachings occupy so important a place in Jewish tradition.

Rabbi Eliezer was a rich man who permitted his wealth, his social position and his generally aristocratic background to influence his attitudes. Dr. Bokser, summarizing Rabbi Eleizer's character, makes it very clear that "it was fully in consonance with his class traditions that he taught a theology in which there was very little concern for the individual; that he was hostile to the non-Jewish world and unfriendly to proselytizing propaganda; that he emphasized the Temple, the cult of sacrifice, and the priesthood; that he championed the interests of agriculture, and defended the rights of property; that he was unsympathetic to the women, the poor, the lowly born, the slave, and the criminal. Conservative in his attitude toward piety and social doctrine, he, like the Sadducees and the Shammaites, was very naturally moved to develop a system of jurisprudence which emphasized stability, uniformity, and opposed change." (p. 157).

Rabbi Eliezer was opposed by his colleagues at almost every point. They even repudiated his doctrines and excommunicated him. They realized how necessary it was to adjust Jewish law and doctrine to the changing conditions of their time, and they fought bitterly to maintain the point of view more in keeping with the actual needs of the people. Indeed, the very reactionism of Rabbi Eliezer brings into relief the commendable progressivism of that group which assumed the leadership of Jewish life and won the confidence of the masses of Jews. But my intention here is not to contrast the attitudes of Rabbi Eliezer and the other Rabbis. I wish merely to point out that in contemplating the personality of a significant individual, we are made aware of the human drama that was enacted in those years, and of the fact that Jewish history, at every stage, could be made interesting and even exciting, if those endowed with the scholarship and the imagination would direct their efforts towards recreating personalities. Zweig's "Jeremiah," Zangwill's "Dreamers of the Ghetto," Feuchtwanger's "Josephus," Sackler's "Festival At Meron" provide ample evidence of the revitalizing influence a study of outstanding personalities has upon our whole interest in Jewish historic events or periods. These are plays, novels and stories. Dr. Bokser's work adds another category: the scholarly study; and he proves that even Ph.D. theses need not be dry-as-dust affairs, that they too can contribute to the revival of our interest in the Jewish past.

* Bloch Publishing Company, New York, 1935.